

Pictorial Provo

AN ILLUSTRATED
INDUSTRIAL REVIEW OF PROVO
THE GARDEN CITY OF

Utah



BY
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THE STORY OF PROVO, UTAH

by

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In 1891 a major project of the chamber of commerce was the completion of a railway system extending from Provo through Heber City and on to Park City and in the other direction from Provo southward through Utah County to the Tintic District.⁶

The early chamber of commerce, occasionally at least, called its meetings with some "fanfare." The Daily Enquirer stated,

*The Opera House Band was out at 7:00 on Thursday evening rendering stirring music and reminding the business men of the City of the Chamber of Commerce meeting to be held at the Court House. The band continued to play until the business men filled the room.*⁷

The early chamber of commerce considered a variety of projects in which it may become involved. One report stated, "The Provo Chamber of Commerce is considering a project for establishing a line of steamers across Utah Lake, to give a more direct route between Provo and other cities on the Lake, and Tintic [mining area]."⁸

A Commercial Club supplanted the chamber of commerce for a time but maintained approximately the same areas of interest.

September 24, 1921, the articles of incorporation were changed and the present Provo Chamber of Commerce came into existence. Thomas A. Pierpont, an industrialist the son of an early Salt Lake industrialist, served as president in 1921-22. John S. Smith, who did much to accelerate the productive capacity of the Knight Woolen Mills, was the second president. A. N. Taylor was the third president serving in 1924. Oscar A. Spear was president in 1925; J. William Knight served in 1926-27; Clayton Jenkins, who more recently became the chamber manager for many years, was the president in 1928; John O. Beesley served in 1929; L. W. Nims, in 1930; H. Aldous Dixon, 1930-31; W. R. Butler, 1932-33; Alex Hedquist, 1934; I. E. Brockbank, 1935; J. N. Ellertson, former Provo Mayor, in 1936. Beginning with Sidney W. Russell, who served as president in 1937-38 and others to the present, including thirty presidents, unnamed herein — all were alive in 1974.

During this second and major period of time the Provo Chamber of Commerce has served in a series of major projects, the realization of which has been of great benefit to Provo and to other communities in Utah County and beyond.

Among the projects sponsored by the chamber are the bringing of the steel plant to Utah County, the Utah Valley Hospital, the Deer Creek Reservoir, the earlier establishment of the Utah County Fair, the development of the Alpine Scenic Loop, the Provo Airport and perpetuation of the Business-Industry-Education Day. The chamber of commerce has not exerted equal effort to all of the above items either in work days or in money but has made substantial contributions to all of them.

One major effort of the chamber of commerce, serving as an example, is the preliminary work to induce the Iron Mountain Steel Plant to locate at or near Provo. September 22, 1922, prominent members of the chamber of commerce and leading citizens of Springville organized themselves into a corporation and through this corporation established a trust company to safeguard the financial contributions of all donors that contributed toward the purchase of the steel plant site. This land acquired by this company of men became the site of the Columbia Steel Corporation. From this development later came the Geneva Works of the United States Steel Company that has contributed extensively to the economy of Provo and to Utah Valley.

Throughout its history the chamber has been an active supporter of Brigham Young University, Utah Technical College in Provo, and the public schools of this city.

More than 50 years ago, when the headquarters of the chamber of commerce was in the sales department of the Superior Motor Company at Provo, the chamber made a "survey of greatest needs" and agreed the following were such needs and began to work on them: (1) better housing facilities, (2) city beautification and improved sanitation, (3) improved recreation facilities, (4) better cooperation with the farmers, (5) more cooperation with Brigham Young University, (6) reclamation of lands in Utah County, and (7) added industrial expansion.

Committees were appointed at that time to pursue each of these projects. The chamber of commerce, to a large degree, operates on a "committee" basis and has from 16 to 20 committees actively at work continuously.

It has a woman's division that perpetuates its own program and cooperates with the chamber when needed.

The secretary-managers of the chamber of commerce since its reorganization in 1921 are Elmo Cunningham, Edwin S. Hinckley, D. Orlo Allen, Clayton Jenkins, Robert Halladay, Charles E. Peterson, William K. Wotherspoon, John W. Manning and Gordon W. Bullock.

The Provo Chamber of Commerce continuously surveys city successes and needs. A major concern during recent years has been that of cooperating with Provo City officials in the development of the downtown off-street parking and the modernization of Center Street. Considerable progress has been made toward the completion of this project, and more will be made, in keeping with official reports, in the near future. Several buildings in the business area of town, one block north and one south of Center Street have been removed in order to provide added parking space.

For many years Provo Chamber of Commerce offices were located at 232 West Center Street. They were then moved to 290 West Center Street; and with the completion of Provo's New City Center Complex in 1972, the chamber offices temporarily were at 371 West Center Street. The offices at present are at 10 East 300 North, Provo. Through its many years of service to the city of Provo, providing helpful information to all who may

need such assistance has been an endless assignment that is self-imposed by the Chamber. As early as 1926 a report on the distribution of information stated,

The Chamber of Commerce, for a series of years, has assumed the place of a general information bureau as part of the work that has been accomplished.

We have directed tourist traffic and have endeavored to furnish information and accurate data pertaining to the varied interests of Utah County and vicinity.

Beside the information which we have disseminated from the office to individuals directly we distributed 20,000 bulletins, several hundred road maps and have answered thousands of inquiries from all parts of the United States and from foreign countries.⁹

The Provo Chamber of Commerce has developed good relations with other similar organizations in Utah and with the United States Chamber of Commerce in such activities that have appeared to be of benefit to the people of Provo.

The Eldred Center

Similar to certain other service agencies in Provo, the Eldred Center has a close legal attachment to Provo City government but is separate in most administrative functions and is maintained primarily for the social, cultural, and educational welfare of senior citizens.

Mr. and Mrs. L. J. Eldred at one time gave to Provo City the plot of ground on which the United States Post Office has been built. This gift originally was made primarily for the purpose of housing recreational facilities for Provo people. An exchange of contractual ownerships later was made in order to accommodate the post office and to acquire money that may be used to aid in the acquisition and construction of the building and ground that has become the Eldred Center.

Other gifts have been given to Provo, such as the building earlier known as the Royden Hotel, awarded by John O. Beesley. The Utahna Gardens, given by Mr. and Mrs. Eldred, was valued at \$75,000 and the gift of the hotel from Mr. Beesley at \$50,000. To these two amounts of money Provo City officials allocated a substantial sum of money, making it possible to erect the Eldred Center.

This center was dedicated February 7, 1965. It serves well the activities for which it was intended. A large variety of programs are endlessly in operation for the more mature people of Provo. It is appropriately staffed with managerial and secretarial personnel that direct this large variety of programs.

In addition to the paid personnel, including some assistance from Provo City and Provo City School District, a substantial number of people do volunteer work at this facility. The services provided at the Eldred Center for senior citizens have had a continuous growth since such services were first initiated.

The Utah State Hospital

The Utah State Hospital in Provo had its beginning in Salt Lake City. In 1869 there was established in that city an institution that was designated a "Salt Lake City Insane Asylum." Dr. Seymour B. Young, a city physician, later purchased this institution and operated it until 1880, when the Utah Territorial Legislature created the Utah Territorial Insane Asylum. In 1885 the initial physical plant buildings of this "asylum" were erected in Provo. When Utah became a state in 1896, this institution was renamed the Utah State Mental Hospital. In 1927, in order to avoid any stigma that was attached to the hospital as a result of the official name, it was given its present name of Utah State Hospital.



The Utah State Hospital came to Provo after attempts to make of it an asylum for the insane. Although it was located at the base of the Wasatch Mountains and at the eastmost end of Provo's Center Street, it largely was isolated by distance and the deeply rutted wagon roads of that day.

Service Clubs

Service clubs have been in Provo for more than half a century. November 18, 1919, the Provo Post stated, "The first regular meeting of the Provo Rotary Club since its organization was held in this City Friday evening." This was the first of the service clubs in Provo. Since that date many others have come sponsored by both men and women. These clubs are designed to serve the community. Most if not all of them have projects at which the members work and toward which they give of themselves and their money. The men's clubs and Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Jaycees, Sertoma, Utah Lake Lions, Timpanogos Kiwanis, Exchange, Edgemont Lions, and Timpanogos Lions. The women's clubs (at this writing) are Business and Professional Women, Women's Council, Jaycees Wives, Provo La Sertoma, Altrusa, Utah Lake Lady Lions, Edgemont Lady Lions, Federated Women, and Lady Lions. Many projects, including several parks, have been established by service clubs.

Electric Power Service

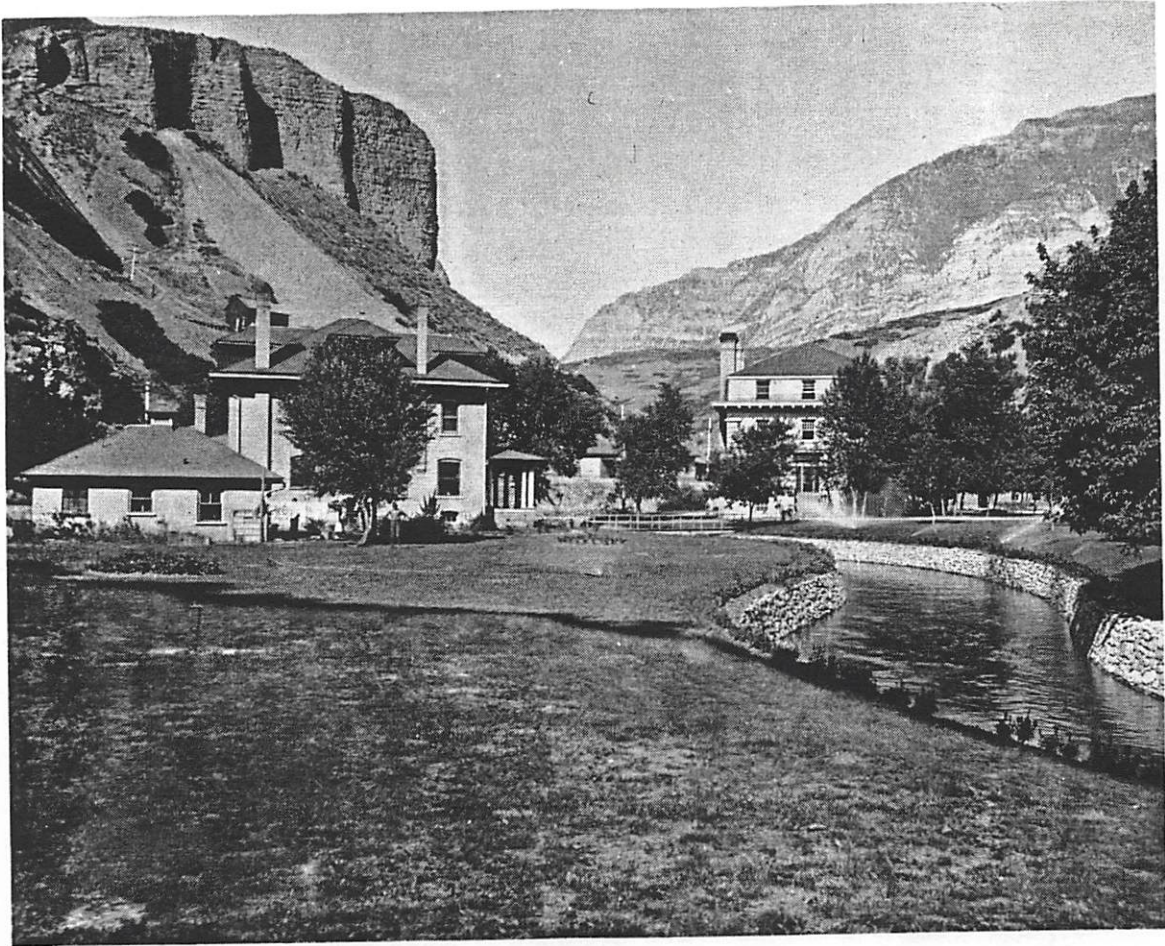
The burning of a cotton string or a piece of cloth in tallow that was derived from a dead animal furnished the residents of Fort Utah with a modest means of night-time light. Then came the kerosene lamps, followed by a few gas lamps, and later came electric power. With electricity came not only an improved method of dispelling darkness within the homes or the streets but also a new means of power to lighten the burdens of man and beast.

The Provo Woolen Mills in 1890 provided Provo with the city's first electric service. In 1899 this system was transferred to "The Electric Company," which in 1912 was absorbed by the Utah Power and Light Company.

Other early attempts were made to get electric power for Provo. These relied on power that could be generated from flowing streams of water; but these, resulting from some years of drought, proved to be unreliable. A more successful attempt was made by L. L. Nunn. in 1890 Mr. Nunn was affiliated with mining interests in Telluride, Colorado. At that time, he became convinced, based upon experimentation, that alternating currents could be used safely and economically for the production of power in mining ventures. He built a power plant at the mouth of Provo Canyon and constructed lines from this plant to the Mercur and Tintic areas (mining towns south and west of Provo) and, with interconnecting lines, extended such lines into Idaho. Before the close of the 1890-1900 decade the Telluride Plant was in operation.

The Utah Power and Light Company purchased the Telluride Plant and used it until the termination of the company's Provo franchise in 1940.

By 1912 Utah Power and Light Company had purchased several smaller companies in Central Utah and received the franchise to furnish light and power to Provo.



In the last decade of the previous century, on this spot at the mouth of Provo Canyon, a scientific experiment was developed that brought an alternating current of electric power into use for mining purposes many miles from here. L. L. Nunn, an associate of a company in Telluride, Colorado, was the instigator of this revolutionary concept. From the success of this development came the Telluride power plant, later to be purchased by Utah Power and Light as this company acquired the Provo franchise in 1912.

Provo-Owned Power

As early as 1931 some citizens were raising the issue of the advisability of investigating municipally-owned power for Provo. Several informal meetings were held in which this issue was discussed. By 1932 Mayor Jess Ellertson became convinced that a more careful study should be made and appointed Elmer A. Jacob, then city engineer, to gather objective data that would provide some evidence on which a decision may be made. These data were gathered from approximately a hundred cities having municipal power at that time, and some cities were visited by Mr. Jacob in company with other city officials.

By 1933 the engineer had accumulated what was believed to be adequate information and submitted such data-supporting evidence to Mayor Ellertson and other city officials justifying city-owned power. A citizens' committee was appointed with Dr. Hugh M. Woodward, Brigham

Young University professor, as chairman. Additional studies were made, and added visits to other cities were completed. In 1934, Mayor A. O. Smoot, successor to Ellertson, appointed an additional committee for further study. Sufficient skepticism by certain Provo citizens and problems of financing such a venture delayed aggressive action for several months.

Mark Anderson, who later became mayor, and a strong advocate of municipally owned power, in 1935 was appointed chairman of a power plant committee. In 1936, following Mark Anderson's election as mayor of Provo, he at once began active effort to make the plant become an actuality. Signatures of 2,383 families, approximately 75% of all residing in Provo, signed a statement in which they agreed to take electrical energy if a municipal plant was established.

The city commission, at that time, consisting of Mayor Mark Anderson, J. P. McGuire, and Jesse Haws, negotiated an agreement with John Nuveen and Company in which through a bonding program the plant could be erected, equipped, and prepared for operation.

Within the same year (1936) the city commission entered into an agreement with the Ulen Contracting Corporation to design and supervise the steam generating plant and distribution system.

The proposed bond election was held October 31, 1936, and gave approval to the commission to proceed to finance the anticipated municipal power plant.

The Utah Power and Light Company formerly had owned a franchise to furnish Provo with power. This issue of possibly changing to public ownership of power was debated enthusiastically for months. In spite of the fact that a large per cent of Provo resident owners had agreed to support a municipal power ownership, the Utah Power and Light Company aggressively opposed such action. With such opposition this issue continued for weeks and weeks. A series of lawsuits came to the courts. In December, 1937, the Utah Supreme Court validated the bonding program and construction ordinances, but the privately-owned power company extended the issue to the United States Supreme Court for final settlement. This highest court on October 17, 1938, made a decision supporting the earlier decision of the Utah Court, thereby terminating the legal issue. At that time Provo's municipal power hastily became a reality.

The city commission formerly had promised to appoint a non-partisan, non-political board to have much of the control of the entire facility. J. Hamilton Calder, Dr. Vasco Tanner, Clarence Harmon, and R. C. Adams, as Provo citizens, were appointed to the board at that time. Provo City took over its own company in April, 1940.

Substantial additions to the plant facility have been made from time to time in order to supply Provo's growth in residences, businesses, the industrial institutions, and the city's own expansion programs with adequate power.

The Utah Power and Light system was purchased by the Provo Municipal Power Company, and during the intervening years has been completely replaced with modern equipment.

The success of the Municipal Power Company is now in historical fact. For each customer in 1940 there are now more than three customers. The Company, owned by Provo City, has attained a reputation of providing excellent service to Provo people.

Substantial progress has been made in the sale of "electric living" to citizens of Provo. As recently as 1951 there was only one house built in Provo that could qualify for certification giving evidence of adequate wiring. By 1958 claim was made by the municipal officials that 80 per cent of the homes built could so qualify. This rate of progress has continued since that date. The City Power began some thirty years ago by serving 4,500 residents. It now serves in excess of 14,000.

By 1971 Provo had 15,650 electric accounts and is continuing to increase year after year. This phenomenal growth has been a financial boon to Provo. The Municipal Power Company annually pays to Provo City a very substantial sum in lieu of taxes once paid by Utah Power and Light Company. The total assets of the entire plant facilities have multiplied several times.

¹ *Laws of Utah*, (approved) January, 15, 1867.

² *Provo City Annual Report*, 1967-68, p. 1.

³ The spelling of this and other names are taken from an 1888 Provo Chamber of Commerce publication.

⁴ Provo Chamber of Commerce, *Provo The Garden City of Utah*, (1888) p. 37.

⁵ *The Daily Enquirer*, December 9, 1889.

⁶ *The Daily Enquirer*, January 24, 1891.

⁷ *The Daily Enquirer*, January 16, 1891.

⁸ *Millennial Star*, Vol. XLIII, February 9, 1891.

⁹ Provo Chamber of Commerce *Annual Report*, 1926.

¹⁰ Grant LeRoy Farnsworth, "Youth Treatment Program, Utah State Hospital Youth Program: Description of Patients," p. 3.